

This is part two of Paul's declaration to the Philippians of "the one thing I do." It is vital for us to examine the life of Paul, and because of his huge success in building the Kingdom, we should follow his example as he followed the example of Jesus. We covered in the last newsletter about not looking backward and forgetting your past not to impede what we should be doing. Paul's next action then is "reaching forward to what lies ahead". In other words, if we are in essence to erase our past, we must create new habits, new godly habits, that make a difference in our lives and the lives of those we meet. So, the question is: what did Paul do to reach forward to what lies ahead? First, he learned the Word of God. Galatians 3:15-18 tells us that Paul went to Arabia for three years and was taught by Jesus himself. I hope you find it interesting that the apostles also were with Jesus for three years!

It is imperative that we *know* the word and *stay* in the word so we can LIVE the Word.

Romans 10:17 says "So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ". Our faith is connected directly to our knowledge and application of His Word.

Romans 1:16 says that the gospel, the Word, "is the power of God for salvation". There is *power* when we use the Word to teach others concerning salvation. Do you remember the introduction of greeting cards that when you opened them, they either talked or sang to you? How cool was that? We were so captivated that we went from one card to another to hear what was next. When we open the Bible, the 66 books of the mind of the Living God, be assured God is talking to you and me! Now, that's really cool! With that understanding, let's renew our energies to learn and live the Word.

Second, he found a work; he got involved in ministry. To paraphrase Acts 26:16-18, Paul's ministry was to preach primarily to the Gentiles. We all know that Paul accepted and excelled in the ministry God assigned for him.

What about us? Do we have a ministry? Are we using the talents and gifts that we have for Him? Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

The responsibility of the leaders of a congregation, the evangelist and the pastors (elders) is to equip the members for works of service. Everyone is called to work. Can you imagine going into a battle in wartime and only the leaders fighting the battle? We know the outcome.

The Church is no different. Now more 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. How about 100% do 100%? What a model that would be. It can be done!

My friend, teacher, and our present Academic Dean Don Cooper says, "you can't serve the Church enough to make them happy; you make them happy by teaching them to serve."

So, again, let's either pursue a ministry or hone/perfect the skills of the ministry in which we presently serve.

Third, Paul was a man of prayer.

II Thessalonians 3:1-2 says, "Finally brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men: for not all have faith."

Why pray? So that the Word of the Lord, the gospel message, would be spread *rapidly!*

Paul and we are in a spiritual battle in which Satan will block, or at least slow down our attempts to grow the Kingdom. When we pray, we allow God to remove the obstacles that the enemy may try. In that way, much more is accomplished and the Kingdom grows *rapidly!*

Imagine two runners in a race, each in his respective lane, but the lane of one runner has holes, mud, high hurdles, (you get the picture). The other runner has no obstacles, a clear path. We know how the race turns out: the runner with no hindrances accomplishes the goal quickly and efficiently. Do we see why Paul asks for prayer? Do we see why we should be in prayer? Allow God to work with and for us through prayer.

So let's reach forward to what lies ahead by:

- Studying the Word
- Working and honing your ministry
- Praying that God has your ministry running rapidly for the Kingdom

Nearing the end of 2024 and looking forward to 2025 and, if you do New Year's resolutions, Paul's "one thing" is a great one for us to reproduce. It's never too late to be what you might become! It's *never* too late to be what you might become!

**Merry** CHRISTmas and **Happy New Year!** Be blessed and be a blessing!

Joe

We survive only because of the support of individuals and churches who know our mission. I want you to consider this as 2024 comes to a close:

1] Make an additional donation for the end of the year. This would be a two-way blessing.

2] More importantly for families or churches, contemplate sponsoring someone or more than one to take a *valuable* class here at the college or, of course, online.

Either way, it's a great way to end 2024 and begin 2025! If Christian education is becoming to you, then you should be coming to us. Make that choice today, call NEOBC and get 'r done !!

SAVE THE DATE:

WE WILL BE CELEBRATING OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2025.

PART OF OUR CELEBRATION WILL INCLUDE MUSIC FROM THE MELTONS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 5.

TIME AND LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED. FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND LOOK AT OUR SPRING NEWSLETTER IN MARCH FOR FULL DETAILS.

"...FORGETTING  
WHAT LIES BEHIND AND  
REACHING FORWARD  
TO WHAT LIES AHEAD..."

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

"Study to show thyself approved unto God... Rightly dividing the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15

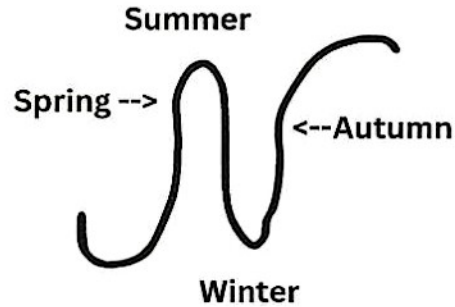


As I was standing on my deck, with the warm rays of sun shining down on me on a cool, crisp autumn Saturday morning after the fog had lifted, I was enjoying looking at God's creation. I noticed the leaves starting to fall from the trees. To me, this is relaxing, calming and peaceful. I love when you can literally hear the leaves falling from the trees. I love watching how they just flutter to the ground like there is no care in the world. How often do we care what others think of us, instead of reflecting on how God cares for us? Our value comes from God, not from others' opinions of us.

Upon watching the leaves falling, I thought of the passage in Scripture from John 15:1-11. It is titled the Vine and the Branches. John 15:1-2 states, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away, and every [branch] that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit." Watching the leaves fall is a reminder of how God prunes away in us that which does not bear good fruit. When we go through this time, it is not easy; then again, who said that living the Christian life would be easy with no troubles? (The Christian life is so worth, it though: think eternity). We go through this so God can strengthen us and grow us closer to Him and whom He plans for us to be. While we are being pruned it can feel like the season winter, where everything is "dead". It is cold; it is dreary; it is dark. Going through the pruning season can be painful, but we know God has something wonderful planned that He is doing in us. He is getting us ready to bear more fruit. Just as one prunes back roses in the autumn so the next summer they will bloom brighter and fuller, God prunes us to prepare us for the work He has planned for us.

Once we get through winter, we begin to see that new growth once again. The world starts to brighten, to be colorful, to be warmer: A season of hope that can refer to us. We hear the chirping of the birds; we see the new leaves on the trees; the flowers start to bloom. If we do not go through the pruning, we don't get to see this newness of hope.

If we think about our lives like the seasons and use a wave, we can see going up is like spring; the top is summer; going down is autumn, and valley is winter.



We have this continued pattern all through our lives. We have hopeful times, peaceful times, difficult times, really hard times, back to hopeful, etc. What would happen if we did not have those times of pruning? Would we be strengthened in our walk with God, or would we just go about life like everything is bright and cheery with no need for anyone or anything? Would we seek out God? God reminds us in this passage to remain in Him and to keep His commandments (vs: 5,6 & 10) *Christians*, are we doing this? Are we keeping His commandments? Let us continue to persevere for the Faith and seek after God's heart. When we go through the times of pruning until the time of spring or renewal, let us not forget it is God working in us to strengthen us in His will for us. Remember, Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us. God tests (prunes) us to bring out the best in us. Be the best for Him! To God be the Glory!

FROM ALL OF US HERE AT  
NORTHEAST OHIO BIBLE COLLEGE



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SPRING 2025 SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

JANUARY 6 - APRIL 15

ALL CLASSES HELD AT THE EAST LIVERPOOL CAMPUS ARE AVAILABLE IN PERSON. THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

MONDAY 9 - 10:50 AM DANIEL (COOPER)

TUESDAY 9 - 9:50 AM ESTHER (COOPER)

TUESDAY 10 - 10:50 AM EPHESIANS (COOPER)

TUESDAY 6 - 8 PM REVELATION (ARNOLD), IN PERSON ONLY at West Liberty Christian Church

WEDNESDAY 9 - 9:50 AM GREEK (COOPER), IN PERSON ONLY

WEDNESDAY 10 - 10:50 AM CHURCH ADMINISTRATION (COOPER), IN PERSON ONLY

CLASSES CAN BE AUDITED - JUST TO LEARN; NO TESTING REQUIRED. CLASS DOES NOT LEAD TO A DIPLOMA. COST TO AUDIT IS \$25/HOUR.

CLASSES TAKEN FOR CREDIT - TO LEARN; TESTING IS REQUIRED. CLASS LEADS TO A DIPLOMA. COST IS \$50/HOUR.

A \$10 REGISTRATION FEE IS APPLIED EACH SEMESTER.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.NEOBC.ORG

OR CONTACT THE OFFICE AT (330) 382 - 1151 OR NEOBC51049@GMAIL.COM

GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE.



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